

# MARKETING MATTERS

Official Publication of the Kentucky Department of Agriculture's Office for Agricultural Marketing and Product Promotion

Volume No. 4 Issue No. 2

Released May 15, 2003

Published Quarterly

## Valentine's Ice Cream Will Make You Melt

By Bill Holleran

Valentine's Gourmet Ice Cream LLC is the only ice cream and frozen dessert manufacturer currently owned and operated by Kentuckians. With headquarters in Winchester, Ky., and a production facility in Lexington, Valentine's is the only ice cream maker in the United States that offers a unique line of bourbon-flavored ice creams in addition to other standard flavors. If Kentucky Bourbon Ball, Mint Julep Chocolate Chip, or Caramel Apple doesn't make your mouth water, you can choose from more than 40 other flavors such as Blueberry or Strawberry Patch. Valentine's also offers sherbets, sorbets, and party punch mixes that have been a hit with caterers and wedding planners.

Scott and Jennifer Berryman and Doug Jones founded Valentine's Ice Cream two years ago with a passion to produce super-premium, all-natural ice cream. All the ice cream is handmade by Scott Berryman in three-gallon batches. This year Valentine's is test marketing ice cream that includes locally grown strawberries, peaches, blackberries, raspberries, and blueberries to offer consumers new flavors and help promote Kentucky agriculture.

"If you can dream it, we can make it," said Jones, who is quick to point out that Valentine's makes custom blends for area restaurants and promotional events for local businesses that purchase a minimum three-gallon order. "We are currently working on some new recipes for pawpaw, molasses, and grape-flavored ice cream, too," said Jones. Valentine's is all-natural with no preservatives or arti-



Scott Berryman founder of Valentine's Gourmet Ice Cream LLC.  
Photo by Sid Webb

cial flavors and can be found at high-end restaurants and specialty food stores from Lexington to Louisville and north to Dayton, Ohio.

"We are hoping to expand and are looking for farmers that want to grow their market as we grow ours," said Jones. Valentine's sampled its products at various farm markets and orchards around the state last year and hopes to distribute even more to gift shops and caterers this year. Gourmet coffee shops have offered Valentine's another growing market to sell its products. Valentine's encourages restaurants, retailers, and country clubs looking to provide customers with a unique Ken-

tucky-made product to give them a call.

Valentine's has featured its products at the Kentucky Derby, Thunder Over Louisville, and other festivals, and provides a calendar on its Web site that lists major events where its products will be offered to the public.

Valentine's distributes to businesses in the Lexington area and has distributors in Louisville and Cincinnati. For more information about Valentine's products, or if you are a producer in the Lexington area looking for an outlet for your berry or fruit crops, call Doug Jones at (859) 576-5898 or Scott Berryman at (859) 749-6759. Visit Valentine's Web site at [www.valentinesicecream.com](http://www.valentinesicecream.com) or in the Country Store section of the Kentucky Department of Agriculture Web site at [www.kyagr.com](http://www.kyagr.com) to find stores and restaurants that carry their products.

Valentine's features the new Kentucky Fresh logo developed by the Kentucky Department of Agriculture. The department is diligently working to promote value-added products that utilize Kentucky-grown products.

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# Show and Fair Division reaches out with technology

By Mary Jane Pettit

Did you miss the name of the participant who exhibited the Supreme Champion Heifer at the Northern Kentucky Beef Preview Show, or the Senior Showmanship Champion at the Lincoln Trail District Hog Show? If so, you can find these names by visiting the Division of Show and Fair Promotion's Web page.

The Division is now posting results and pictures of each show held throughout the Commonwealth for beef, dairy, goats, sheep, and swine. The Division feels this is one more way to market and promote the future leaders of Kentucky agriculture.

Acting Division Director Warren Beeler has put a strong emphasis on using today's technology to educate youth and promote various livestock programs. "We are in the business of passing out praise to the kids," Beeler said. "The

more times the kids can get recognition and the full benefit of the livestock program, the better we are doing our job."

Not only can viewers find results of the shows, but they can also obtain updated rules and regulations as well as show dates for the 2003 show season. In addition, the division notifies local newspapers in each exhibitor's region. The newspaper can then obtain the information for an article. With the new Web page, anyone can download the pictures as a keepsake from the event.

In addition to the Web site, the Division is also creating livestock CD-ROMs involving the five species for use in Kentucky schools. These will include everything from math problems to life cycles of each animal, as well as information on showmanship and animal care. There is great anticipation for teachers across the Commonwealth to use these CDs in their classrooms to market agriculture. This is another tool for the Division to promote

the image of animal agriculture to those familiar and unfamiliar with it.

"We at the Division of Show and Fair Promotion are as much about kid development as we are about livestock shows," Beeler said. "We use our shows to teach the lessons, our CDs to expand their knowledge, and our Web site to enhance the glory and praise received from the experience. Our ultimate goal is to help the parents and leaders develop a fine, self-respecting young adult who will be a positive contributor to society, whatever the endeavor."

## Show/Sale Results

Kentucky Beef Expo—175 youth participated in the cattle judging contest, and there were 472 entries in junior steer and heifer shows. 540 head averaged \$1,382 per lot. The fifth annual Pen Heifer Sale averaged \$1,032 on 105 lots.

Kentucky Dairy Nationals—330 entries averaged \$1,989 per lot.

## The Doctor's Office

By Dr. Cris Young



Do you have a mineral problem in your cattle herd? Odds are you do. In fact, the USDA has performed two nationwide studies looking at mineral levels in forages (grass pasture or hay). In both studies, samples were obtained in Kentucky. In those studies copper was found to be deficient in 14.2 percent of samples and marginal in 49.7 percent of samples. Selenium was deficient in 44.3 percent of samples and zinc was deficient in 63.4 percent of samples. In fact, only 2.5 percent of forage samples contained adequate zinc to meet the needs of cattle.

Here is some sobering data. The USDA collected blood samples to look at serum copper levels. In herds that **did not provide** supplemental copper, 43.2 percent were moderately deficient in copper and 2.7 percent were severely deficient. In herds that **did provide** supplemental copper 38 percent were moderately deficient and 1.1 percent were severely deficient. Wow! Two questions should come to mind: I supplement, but am I doing enough, and hey, doc, what the heck is going on?

We can follow a fairly simple process to determine what is going on. First,

have your forage tested for minerals. You can contact your veterinarian, county Extension agent or feed company to assist you in getting this done. Many feed companies will perform a forage analysis for you for free so that they can have the opportunity to mix and sell a mineral to you. Second, have your water tested for sulfates and iron (and maybe molybdenum). You can have this done at various water quality labs across the state. Third, have your veterinarian pull blood samples to have an analysis done to determine copper levels (and potentially zinc and selenium). These three steps will allow you to collect the needed data to determine the mineral status of your cattle operation.

Iron, sulfates, and molybdenum are antagonists that tie up copper and other minerals and prevent them from being absorbed. I have worked with operations where iron levels in ponds caused the need for five to six times more copper than is normally included. The molybdenum and sulfates can work the same way.

A word of caution, as you go out looking for a trace mineral: Different forms of minerals are absorbed at different levels by the animal. Some people will try to convince you that you need to

pay considerably more for organic sources of mineral. My experience has not shown this. In fact, Western Kentucky University did some nice work looking at the serum and liver copper levels prior to supplementation. After 150 days of supplementation with copper sulfate, the animals went from having an average copper level that was marginal to deficient to having an average copper level within the normal range.

Healthy cattle ensure buyers have a positive buying experience, and the overall reputation of Kentucky feeder cattle is improved through the experience. Buyers will bid more aggressively on cattle they know are healthy. If you retain ownership of your cattle, meeting critical mineral needs is an integral step in developing a healthy carcass. At the farm, mineral deficiencies can mean reproductive losses. Meeting your cow's nutritional needs is insurance that she can produce a healthy calf and rebreed in a timely fashion.

For more information contact the KDA, your local veterinarian, feed company, or county Extension agent. Together we can work to determine your current mineral status and what you need to do to correctly supplement your herd.

# FMNP program will help seniors

By Anna Lucio

The Farmer's Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) has worked to provide fresh, nutritious food to low-income families across the Commonwealth enrolled in the Women Infants and Children (WIC) nutrition program. This year it's expanding to include low-income seniors and the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) with help from a \$750,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Under the Senior FMNP, eligible seniors will receive 10 \$2 coupons at their local senior citizens center or cooperative extension office to be used in one of 38 participating counties or CSFP pickup sites. Local health departments will continue to issue WIC-FMNP coupons through the existing FMNP program in 39 counties. Over \$1 million in coupons will be issued this year through the combined programs. The goal of the program is to help provide better access to fresh fruits and vegetables, and promote good health.

Farmers who accept coupons must be in an approved farmers' market, attend training, and follow the FMNP rules and guidelines. Farmers are issued a number that they write on the coupons along with their name and then turn in to their farmers' market coordinator. Coordinators also receive training on how the process works, and they submit coupons monthly to the Kentucky Department of Agriculture. KDA then sends checks back to the coordinators to pay the farmers. (Since grant funding is tied to participation, we encourage all farmers in approved markets to submit coupons to their coordinator in the market where you accept the coupons so we can continue to show support for the program.)

Seniors should contact their county Extension office or senior citizen center to find out if their county is participating. For more information about the new program, contact Anna Lucio in the Division of Value-Added Horticulture & Aquaculture at (502) 564-4983.

## Nursery liners available in Kentucky

By Hope Crain

Nursery liners are the seed stock that produce the trees and shrubs you might find at your local nursery or garden center. Did you know a nursery liner producer in Springfield, Ky., supplies aspens for Colorado, and Kentucky ships a variety of nursery liners to other states across the country? Wholesale and retail nurseries and garden centers can now find Kentucky suppliers quickly and easily by getting a free copy of the 2003 Kentucky Grown Landscape Plant Availability Guide from the Kentucky Department of Agriculture. The directory lists producers that sell liners, containers, and balled and burlapped products.

"Liner producers start plants and may grow them up to two years before they are sold to wholesalers who line them out in fields where they continue growing before they are sold to retail customers," said KDA marketing specialist Hope Crain. Wholesalers may continue growing some varieties four

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years before they are ready for market.

Liner prices are industry-driven and vary according to supply and variety. Farmers thinking about growing liners should look at variety selection, access to irrigation, and weed control measures when determining overhead costs. Production guides for landscape and nursery crops are available from Bob McNeil at the University of Kentucky. With more emphasis on agriculture diversification, and farmers wanting to try new crops, growers are encouraged to purchase liners from local Kentucky farmers first before buying liners elsewhere. For more information on landscape and nursery marketing or a free copy of the guide, contact Crain at (502) 564-4983.

## Marketing Alliance Formed

Staff Report

The Kentucky Grower/Shippers Alliance has a new name, the Kentucky Produce and Aquaculture Alliance (KPAA), and an executive director, Allison Shepherd. The Kentucky Center For Cooperative Development (KCCD) announced the changes last winter.

The Alliance was formed with help from the Kentucky Horticulture Society, regional produce and aquaculture cooperatives, large grower/shippers, and the Kentucky Department of Agriculture. The group's mission is to "unify member efforts by networking to promote our products, explore new market opportunities and ensure quality to maximize our economic well-being," Shepherd said.

The KPAA's first meeting on March 6 included representatives from the Green River Produce Marketing Cooperative, West Kentucky Growers Cooperative, Purchase Area Aquaculture Cooperative, Goodin View Farms, KCCD, and KDA.

The alliance plans to work on networking, communication, insurance, equipment, operating supplies, market research and development, third-party verification opportunities, and alternative income opportunities for fresh produce and aquaculture producer entities capable of shipping in bulk. For more information, contact Allison Shepherd at (270) 769-5258 or by e-mail at [ashepherd@kccd.info](mailto:ashepherd@kccd.info).

### In the News

- Kentucky-grown catfish is now available in Kroger stores throughout Kentucky. Look for the Kentucky Fresh Logo.
- May 20—Don't forget to vote for your favorite candidate for Commissioner of Agriculture.
- May 28-31—Beef Improvement Federation Convention, Lexington, Ky.
- June 11-14—State FFA Convention at the Galt House in Louisville, Ky.
- July 24—WKU/UK Field Day, Bowling Green, Ky.
- Aug. 14-24—Kentucky State Fair

\* Visit the [www.kyagr.com](http://www.kyagr.com) calendar for a complete list of agriculture-related events.

# Kentucky strawberries are a sweet treat this month!

Strawberries will begin to ripen this month in Kentucky, and your local strawberry growers have the freshest, best-tasting berries around. Whether you buy picked berries or visit a U-pick patch, you will be rewarded with the best berries raised by your friends and neighbors.

Strictly Strawberries owners Cal and Judi Blake of Lexington, are hoping good weather will have their 1.5-acre patch brimming with berries this year.

"Strawberries are weather sensitive," Cal said. "A hard freeze will kill the blooms that develop into berries. Because they are weather-sensitive, profit margins can fluctuate from \$6,000 to \$17,000 on my crop in good years."

The Blakes use drip irrigation and plastic mulch to protect the crop from dry conditions and select the best-tasting varieties with different maturity rates to extend the harvest season. Earliglow, Delmarvel, Allstar, and Mesabi berries are all sold at their roadside stand at the corner of Nicholasville Road and Man O' War Boulevard in Lexington.

Blake urges farmers thinking about



**Cal Blake checking strawberry blooms in mid-April.**

growing fruit or vegetable crops to look at commercial growers guides, seek advice from other growers and follow their recommendations. "Get the manuals, make the investment in the right chemicals and abide by the spray schedules to do it right, so you will know what worked," said Blake. Blake also urges farmers to make the investment in a good quality digital scale so they can sell products like tomatoes by the pound. "If farmers are willing to do the work, and they have quality products customers want, they can sell them," Blake said.

Blake runs an ad in the local paper with the phone number 275-BERI that customers can call to find out when berries will be available each year. He updates this voice mailbox daily to inform customers of the crop's progress and when the stand will be open. Blake said if we don't get frost he may offer some u-pick opportunities to some select customers; inexperienced pickers can damage fields and berries, and require more supervision. A hard frost could kill the blossoms, lower yields, and reduce the need to offer U-pick berries.

For more information on roadside markets and tips on how to pick strawberries, look for Kentucky Farm Bureau's brochure, Certified Roadside Markets, or visit the KFB Web site, <http://www.kyfb.com/federation/home.asp> for details. Look for the Kentucky Fresh logo at roadside markets, and check the Kentucky Department of Agriculture's Web site at [www.kyagr.com](http://www.kyagr.com) or call Anna Lucio at (502) 564-4983 for assistance with direct marketing.

**—Bill Holleran**

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